3-month summary

- Stormy conditions, and impacts from high winds, are more likely than normal
- Higher than normal chance of this period being wet
- The period is unlikely to be cold overall
- However, shorter-lived cold spells remain possible

3-month likelihood of impact

Temperature

5% chance the season will be COLD	40% chance the season will be NEAR AVERAGE	55% chance the season will be MILD
0.3× the normal chance	0.7× the normal chance	2.8× the normal chance

Precipitation

15% chance the season will be DRY	55% chance the season will be NEAR AVERAGE	30% chance the season will be WET
0.8× the normal chance	0.9× the normal chance	1.5× the normal chance

Wind speed

10% chance the season will be CALM	55% chance the season will be NEAR AVERAGE	35% chance the season will be WINDY
0.5× the normal chance	0.9× the normal chance	1.8× the normal chance

1-month summary

- There is a slight reduction in the chance of a cold month
- The greatest chance of cold spells is early in the month
- The chance of a dry month is slightly greater than normal
- Impacts from heavy rainfall remain possible, however, especially in the north of the UK
- The likelihood of a calm or windy month are evenly balanced

1-month likelihood of impact

Temperature

10% chance the month will be COLD	60% chance the month will be NEAR AVERAGE	30% chance the month will be MILD
0.5× the normal chance	1.0× the normal chance	1.5× the normal chance

Precipitation

30% chance the month will be DRY	55% chance the month will be NEAR AVERAGE	15% chance the month will be WET
1.5× the normal chance	0.9× the normal chance	0.8× the normal chance

Wind speed

25% chance the month will be CALM	50% chance the month will be NEAR AVERAGE	25% chance the month will be WINDY
1.3× the normal chance	0.8× the normal chance	1.3× the normal chance

Understanding the Outlook

The Outlook uses 3 categories for possible UK temperature, precipitation and wind speed in the next 1 and 3 months:

COLD, NEAR AVERAGE and MILD for temperature
WET, NEAR AVERAGE and DRY for precipitation
CALM, NEAR AVERAGE and WINDY for wind speed

These are linked to observed UK conditions in past years. The NEAR AVERAGE category represents typical conditions for the period and has a normal likelihood of 60%. The higher and lower categories represent more unusual conditions that are more likely to produce impacts. Each has a normal likelihood of 20%.

The Outlook shows how the chances of occurrence of the categories differ from normal, based on knowledge of expected global meteorological patterns. It does not identify which category will actually occur.

Same 3-month period over the last 10 years

2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024
NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE COLD NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE MILD NEAR AVERAGE MILD
NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE WET NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE
NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE WINDY NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE

Same 1-month period over the last 10 years

2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024
NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE MILD COLD NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE
NEAR AVERAGE WET DRY NEAR AVERAGE DRY NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE DRY NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE
WINDY NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE CALM NEAR AVERAGE CALM NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE NEAR AVERAGE

Outlook in context

Drivers of UK weather for January to March
Global weather patterns can affect UK weather during the coming season and their influence acts to shift the chances of the categories in the Outlook. Drivers relevant to the current Outlook are:
• The warming of UK climate consistent with wider global warming trends
• The likely weak La Niña event in the coming months, increasing the chance of westerly winds
• A westerly phase of the Quasi-Biennial Oscillation (QBO) in the tropical stratosphere, which increases the likelihood of westerly winds from the Atlantic
• A stronger-than-usual stratospheric polar vortex, which favours westerly winds early in the period
• An active MJO (Madden-Julian Oscillation), which increases the chances of northerly or easterly winds during early-January

Long-range weather predictions
The Met Office and other prediction centres around the world routinely produce long-range forecasts of conditions in the months ahead. During January, these show a moderate increase in the likelihood of pressure to be higher than average near, or to the south of, the UK. Through February and March, lower-than-normal pressure becomes more likely north of the UK with above-normal pressure south of the UK. This pattern would lead to winds blowing more frequently from the Atlantic Ocean, which reduces the likelihood of a cold 3-month period and increases the chance of wet and stormy conditions.

Impacts
Consistent with our warming climate and a greater likelihood of mild, westerly winds, there is only a small chance of the period overall being cold. However, this does not preclude the possibility of some cold spells and related impacts, these being more likely in January. The chance of impacts from wet and windy weather is increased compared to normal, particularly during February and March. Although there is increased likelihood of wetter-than-average conditions for the UK, rainfall amounts across southern parts of the UK are less certain. The likelihood of the period being windy is greater than normal, implying stormy spells of weather are more likely than in a typical late-winter period.

Outlook compared to normal likelihood

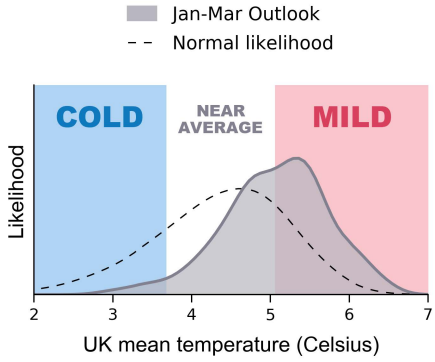
The curves below show the likelihood of the 1- and 3-month average temperature, precipitation and wind speed taking specific values. In each case:

- The dashed curve shows the normal likelihood based on how often each value has been recorded in past years
- The solid curve shows the current likelihood based on the Outlook for this year

The differences in these curves show how the probabilities for the coming periods differ compared to past years. Where the solid curve (corresponding to this year's Outlook) lies above the dashed curve (normal likelihood), the temperature, precipitation or wind speed at that point has a greater-than-normal likelihood of occurring. Likewise, wherever it is below the dashed curve, the likelihood of those values is less than normal.

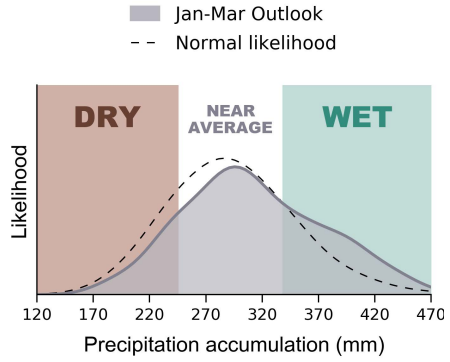
A shift of the solid curve to the left of the dashed curve indicates an increase in the chances of below-average temperature, rainfall or winds. A shift to the right, meanwhile, indicates increased chances of above-average values.

3-month temperature Outlook compared to normal



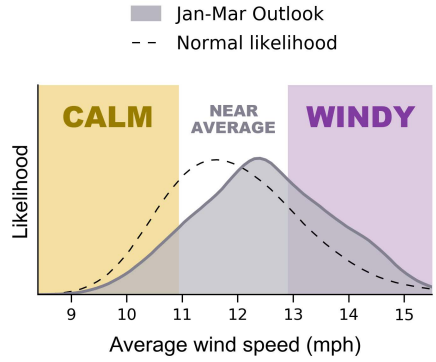
Likelihood leans towards mild

3-month precipitation Outlook compared to normal



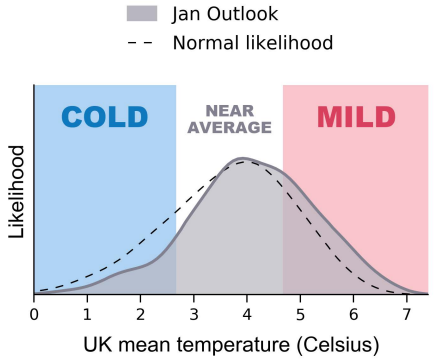
Likelihood leans towards wet

3-month wind speed Outlook compared to normal



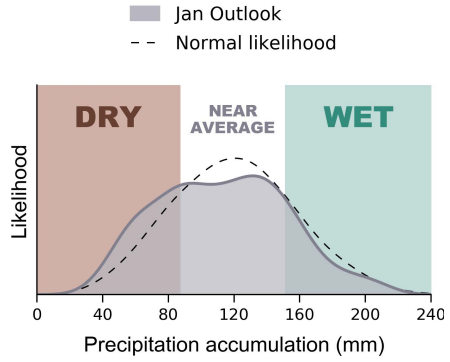
Likelihood leans towards windy

1-month temperature Outlook compared to normal



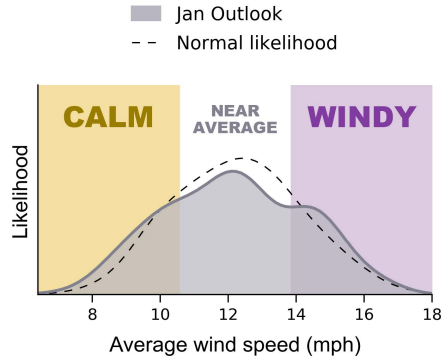
Likelihood leans moderately towards mild

1-month precipitation Outlook compared to normal



Likelihood leans slightly towards dry

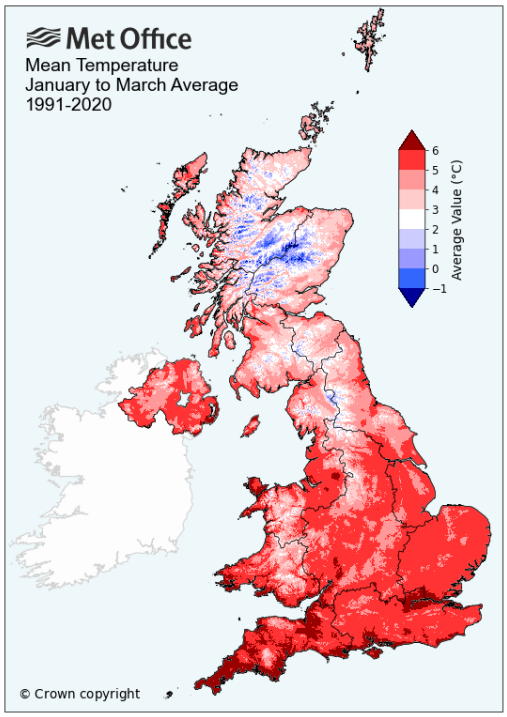
1-month wind speed Outlook compared to normal



Likelihoods of calm and windy are similar

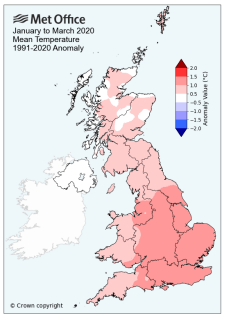
Long-term average temperatures (3-month)

This page shows the long-term average temperatures across the UK applicable to the 3-month Outlook period.

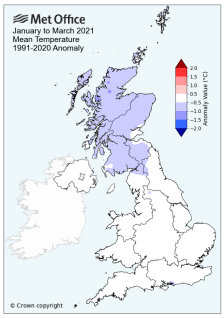


Average temperatures for January - March based on observations of past years.

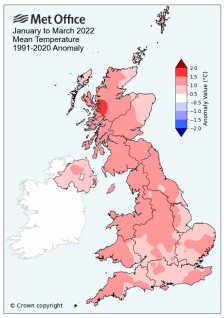
Last 5 years temperatures, difference from average (3-month)



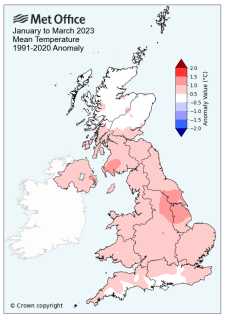
Jan - Mar 2020



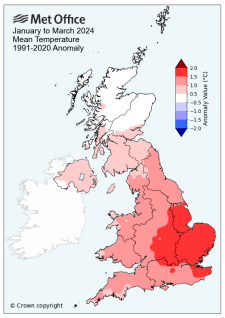
Jan - Mar 2021



Jan - Mar 2022



Jan - Mar 2023



Jan - Mar 2024

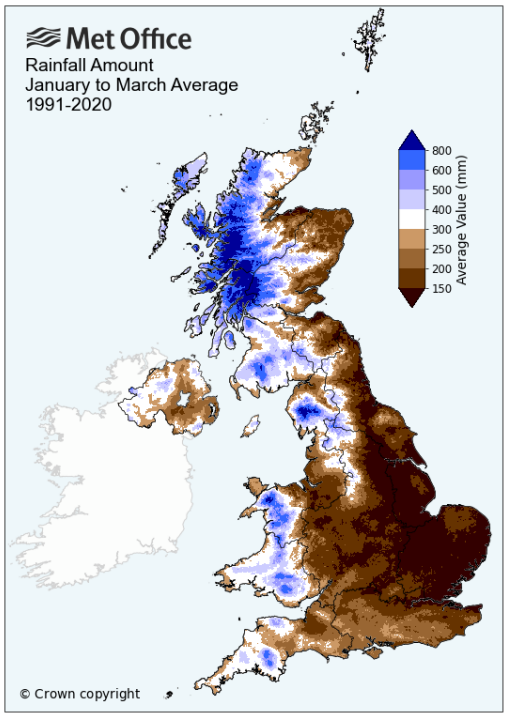
Anomaly (°C)

< -2.0	-2.0 to -1.5	-1.5 to -1.0	-1.0 to-0.5	-0.5 to 0.5	0.5 to 1.0	1.0 to 1.5	1.5 to 2.0	> 2.0

These maps show how January - March temperatures in the last five years differed from the long-term average temperatures shown above in the upper panel. Pink and red colours indicate warmer-than-average conditions while blue shades indicate cooler-than-average conditions. Detailed information on the climate of the UK is available at www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate.

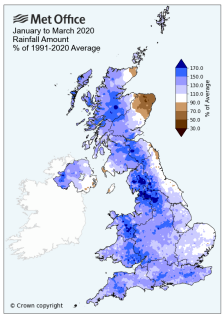
Long-term average precipitation (3-month)

This page shows the long-term average precipitation across the UK applicable to the 3-month Outlook period.

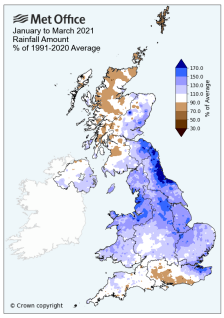


Average precipitation for January - March based on observations of past years.

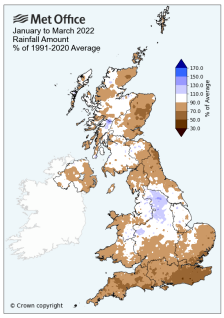
Last 5 years precipitation, difference from average (3-month)



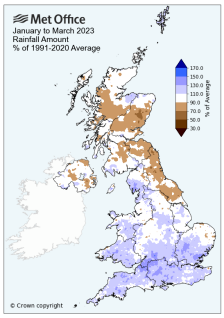
Jan - Mar 2020



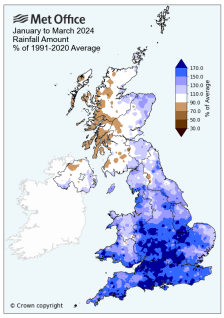
Jan - Mar 2021



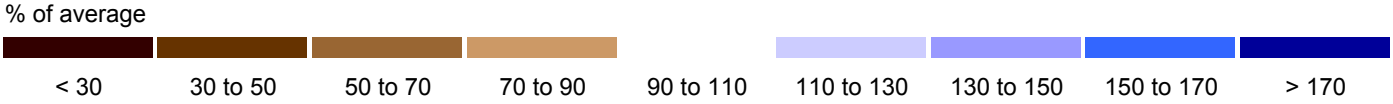
Jan - Mar 2022



Jan - Mar 2023



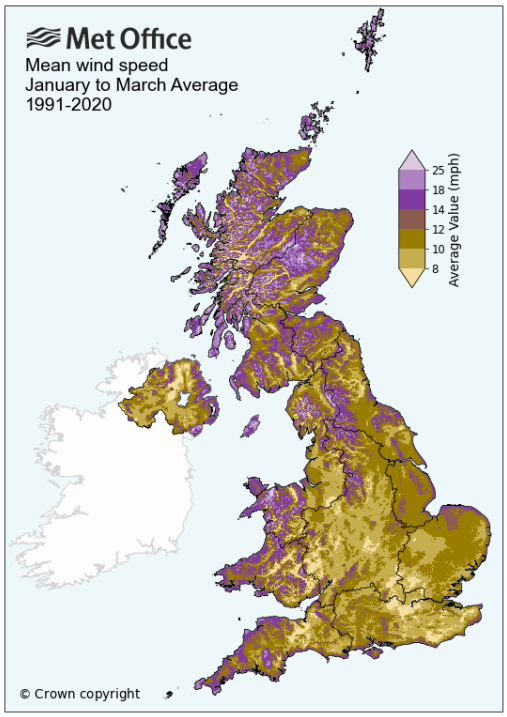
Jan - Mar 2024



These maps show how January - March precipitation in the last five years differed from the long-term average precipitation shown above in the upper panel. Brown colours indicate drier-than-average conditions while blue shades indicate wetter-than-average conditions. Detailed information on the climate of the UK is available at www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate.

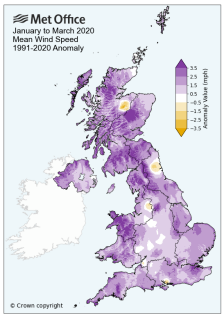
Long-term average wind speed (3-month)

This page shows the long-term average wind speed across the UK applicable to the 3-month Outlook period.

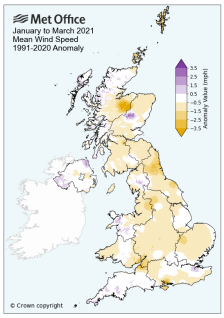


Average wind speed for January - March based on observations of past years.

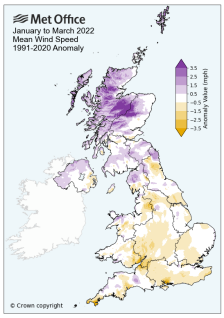
Last 5 years wind speed, difference from average (3-month)



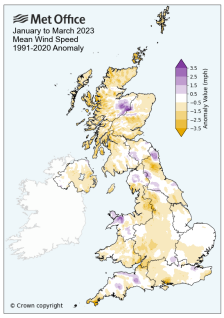
Jan - Mar 2020



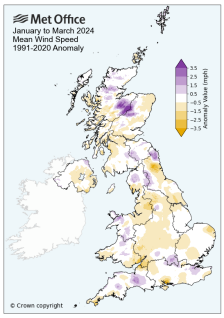
Jan - Mar 2021



Jan - Mar 2022



Jan - Mar 2023



Jan - Mar 2024

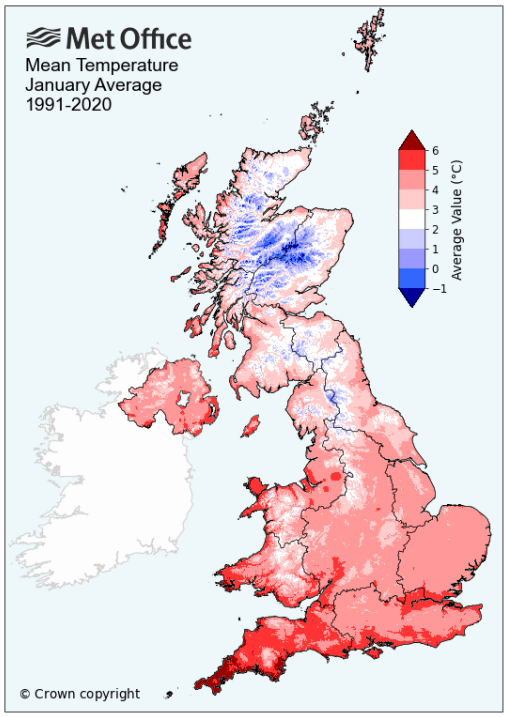
Anomaly (mph)

< -3.5	-3.5 to -2.5	-2.5 to -1.5	-1.5 to -0.5	-0.5 to 0.5	0.5 to 1.5	1.5 to 2.5	2.5 to 3.5	> 3.5

These maps show how January - March wind speed in the last five years differed from the long-term average wind speeds shown above in the upper panel. Yellow colours indicate calmer-than-average conditions while purple shades indicate windier-than-average conditions. Detailed information on the climate of the UK is available at www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate.

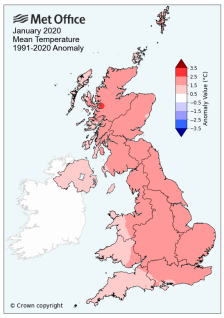
Long-term average temperatures (1-month)

This page shows the long-term average temperatures across the UK applicable to the 1-month Outlook period.

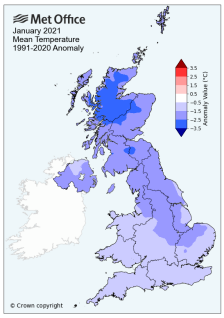


Average temperatures for January based on observations of past years.

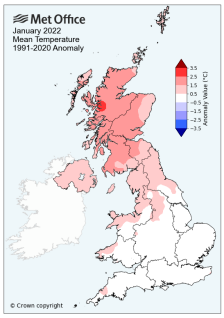
Last 5 years temperatures, difference from average (1-month)



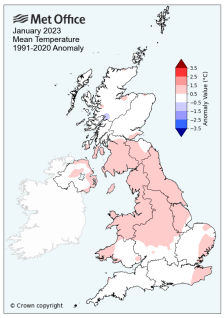
Jan 2020



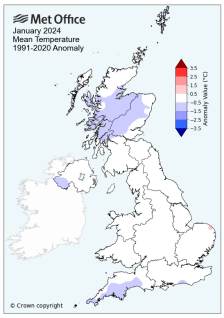
Jan 2021



Jan 2022



Jan 2023



Jan 2024

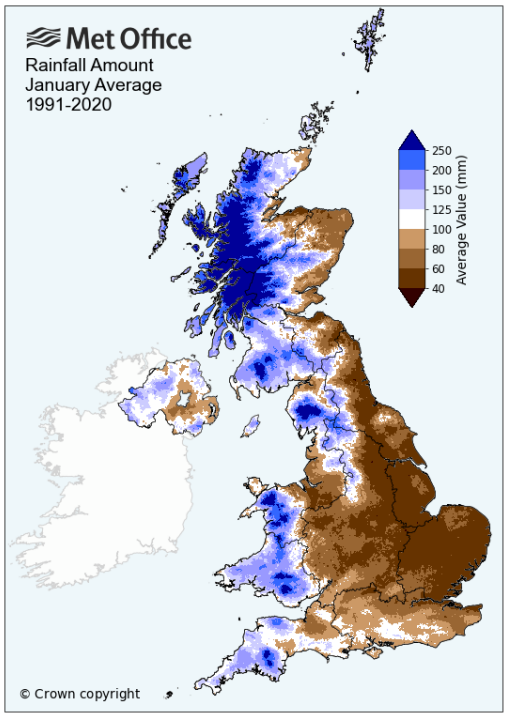
Anomaly (°C)

< -3.5	-3.5 to -2.5	-2.5 to -1.5	-1.5 to -0.5	-0.5 to 0.5	0.5 to 1.5	1.5 to 2.5	2.5 to 3.5	> 3.5

These maps show how January temperatures in the last five years differed from the long-term average temperatures shown above in the upper panel. Pink and red colours indicate warmer-than-average conditions while blue shades indicate cooler-than-average conditions. Detailed information on the climate of the UK is available at www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate.

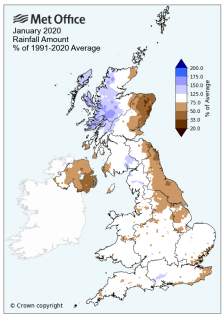
Long-term average precipitation (1-month)

This page shows the long-term average precipitation across the UK applicable to the 1-month Outlook period.

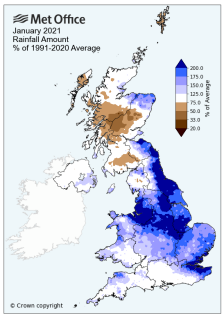


Average precipitation for January based on observations of past years.

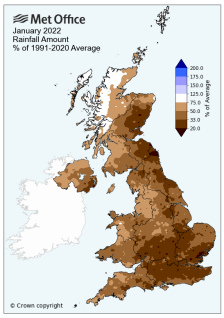
Last 5 years precipitation, difference from average (1-month)



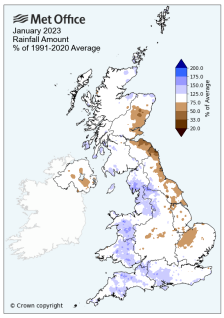
Jan 2020



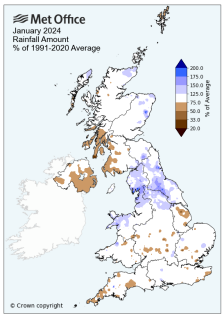
Jan 2021



Jan 2022



Jan 2023



Jan 2024

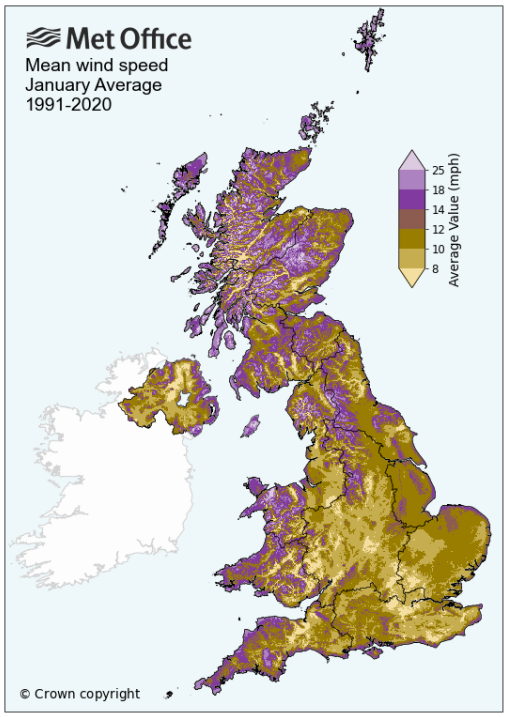
% of average

< 20	20 to 33	33 to 50	50 to 75	75 to 125	125 to 150	150 to 175	175 to 200	> 200

These maps show how January precipitation in the last five years differed from the long-term average precipitation shown above in the upper panel. Brown colours indicate drier-than-average conditions while blue shades indicate wetter-than-average conditions. Detailed information on the climate of the UK is available at www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate.

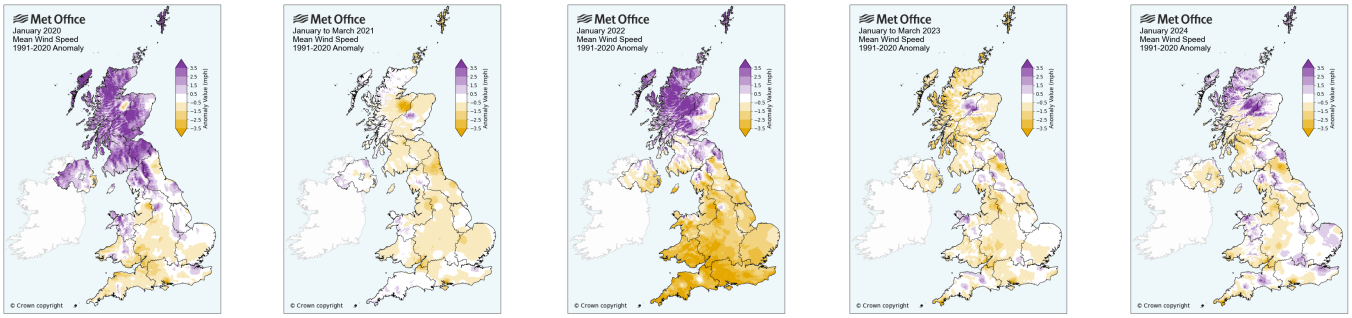
Long-term average wind speed (1-month)

This page shows the long-term average wind speed across the UK applicable to the 1-month Outlook period.



Average wind speed for January based on observations of past years.

Last 5 years wind speed, difference from average (1-month)



Jan 2020 | Jan 2021 | Jan 2022 | Jan 2023 | Jan 2024

Anomaly (mph)

< -3.5 | -3.5 to -2.5 | -2.5 to -1.5 | -1.5 to -0.5 | -0.5 to 0.5 | 0.5 to 1.5 | 1.5 to 2.5 | 2.5 to 3.5 | > 3.5

These maps show how January wind speed in the last five years differed from the long-term average wind speeds shown above in the upper panel. Yellow colours indicate calmer-than-average conditions while purple shades indicate windier-than-average conditions. Detailed information on the climate of the UK is available at www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate.

Q&As

Q. What is the point of the Outlook, who is it meant for?
A. This Outlook is produced for planners in government and business who make risk-based decisions. These users are aware of the complexities of this type of outlook and will include those factors in their decision-making process.

Q. How did you decide on the Outlook? What are the main factors affecting it?
A. It is based on information from observations, several numerical prediction systems and expert judgement. See the 'Outlook in Context' section of the Outlook for more details.

Q. Is the Outlook for the whole country?
A. The Outlook is for the average of conditions over the UK as a whole. Regional deviations from the UK-average can occur. For example, average UK precipitation can result from below-average rainfall for the northwest and above-average for the southeast.

Q. How confident are you in this Outlook?
A. The percentages in the 'Likelihood of Impact' sections of the Outlook give the level of confidence.

Q. Does the Outlook mean there is an increased chance of named storms and flooding?
A. Whilst the Outlook shows an increased likelihood of impacts from wet and windy weather it cannot specify the severity, duration, or timings of specific events such as storms. The chance of impacts looks more likely during February and March. Although there is an increased likelihood of wetter-than-average conditions for the UK as a whole, rainfall amounts across southern parts of the UK look less certain. It is too early to say how this might translate into flood risk, so it is important to monitor the risks in your area on the Environment Agency, SEPA, NI Direct and Natural Resources Wales websites and the latest Met Office warnings and forecasts at https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/

Q. Does this Outlook mean we will not have snow throughout the rest of winter?
A. The Outlook concerns weather themes over the whole month or 3-month period and cannot tell us whether or not, or indeed when, we might have snow. Broadly speaking, milder UK winters have less snow, but it is still possible to have cold, snowy periods embedded within winters that are mild overall. These are more likely early in the period. Information about the January period can be obtained from our shorter-range forecasts on the website https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/

About the Outlook

The Outlook presented here is for United Kingdom as a whole and is based on information from observations, several numerical prediction systems and expert judgement. It is updated monthly to reflect the latest information on global weather patterns and their effect on the UK. The Outlook is designed to be used in conjunction with shorter-range forecasts – detailed weather forecast information is available on the Met Office website.

In this product, temperature refers to the average of daytime maxima and night-time minima. Wind speed refers to the average wind speed at a height of 10 metres. All numerical values relate to averages (temperature, wind speed) or totals (precipitation – rain, sleet, snow and hail) over 1 or 3 months, which are further averaged over the UK land area as a whole. Normal likelihood and long-term averages are established using the period 1991-2020.

Find out more

- UK 3-month Outlook user guidance page:
  https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/services/government/contingency-planners/user-guidance/user-guidance
- Explainers on climate drivers (such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation and North Atlantic Oscillation) that influence seasonal forecasts and the impacts they can have on UK weather:
  https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/services/government/contingency-planners/seasonal-forecasts-and-climate-drivers-resources
- Contingency planners page:
  https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/services/government/contingency-planners/index

Contact us

Website:
www.metoffice.gov.uk

Email:
enquiries@metoffice.gov.uk

Provide your feedback

We would like to hear your feedback on the UK 3-month Outlook to understand how it is being used. Please fill in the short form using this link or QR code to share your thoughts.